

SEVEN PAGES OF COVERAGE GAZA EYEWITNESS—UNDER THE BOMBS >>**Page 3**

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SETTLER VIOLENCE >>**Page 6** BRITISH PROTESTS, TORIES AND ISRAEL >>**Pages 4&5**

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AS PALESTINIANS FIGHT ISRAELI TERROR...



PALESTINIANS SHOUT slogans in support of the Al Aqsa Mosque during a rally in Gaza city

VICTORY TO RESISTANCE

DEMONSTRATE SAT 22 MAY, 1PM, EMBANKMENT, LONDON WC2N 6NS



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'My home town has gone communist'

Jeremy Clarkson writing on Chipping Northon voting Labour

'Watch the Labour Party roar back to life with an agenda not seen since Vladimir Lenin decided he'd had enough of the tsar'

Clarkson explains how Labour will win votes if posh people are too annoying

'Six to one'

New Democratic Unionist Party leader Edwin Poots argues Catholics are six times more likely to infect people with Covid-19

'We should stop forcing local authorities to create Traveller sites... phase out the ethnic minority rights of people who are not a race but a doomed mindset'

Times columnist Matthew Parris calls for a relentless "squeeze" to get rid of Travellers



Lord Lister and the loan for property developers

HOMES ENGLAND is a government agency set up with the purpose of funding "affordable homes". It met on 9 May 2019 to consider a request from a luxury property company for a £187 million publicly-backed loan.

Unexpectedly, the chairman showed up. He was Lord Udny-Lister, then just Sir Edward. In his £68,000 a year role Lister was not required or expected to attend meetings.

Those in the room did not know that Lister was being paid by the developer that would benefit from the loan.

Lister was Boris Johnson's close ally, who went on to become his chief strategic adviser in Downing Street. He left the government suddenly last month.

Lister's resignation followed a series of stories of potential conflicts of interest.

Donated

The latest details about Lister's role at Homes England centre on his work for Delancey, run by Jamie Ritblat. Delancey has donated more than £350,000 to the Tories, including £100,000 in the run-up to the last general election.

Just before the 2012 Olympics, Delancey and the Qatari state formed a consortium to buy the new Olympic Village in Stratford, east London.

At the time, Johnson was mayor, while Lister was his deputy responsible for planning.

Lister signed off the sale of the village, with Johnson describing it as a

"great deal for London". It was sold for £275 million less than it cost to build.

In March 2015, the Delancey and Qatari joint venture borrowed £181 million in public funds to develop two plots of land in the village.

They included Victory Plaza—two high-rise towers of 482 flats. Plans said it would have bars and restaurants, and rooftop gardens.

The money came from Homes England's build-to-rent fund. The Olympic Park became a flagship build-to-rent site. By May 2019, Victory Plaza had been completed. Delancey and the Qataris had created a company to market and run the flats.

That company was Get Living, whose joint biggest shareholder is Delancey Oxford Residential. Get Living applied to a separate Homes England scheme to pay off the £181 million loan.

The fund was known as the private rented sector guarantee scheme, designed to encourage companies to run newly built, privately rented flats.

Get Living's application was for a loan of £187 million.

In other words, a Delancey-led firm would be borrowing public money to pay off a publicly funded loan that Delancey had used to build the blocks.

Interests

Lister was being paid by Delancey at the time. In his register of interests, Lister had declared that he advised a firm called Dream Ltd, a formulation that has

not been used before or since and is a reference to Delancey Real Estate Asset Management.

With Lister present, the committee agreed to approve the loan.

Two months after the meeting, Lister resigned as chairman of Homes England to become the chief adviser to Johnson, by now the prime minister.

While in Downing Street, Lister continued to be paid by Delancey and invited Ritblat to advise on policy towards the property sector during the pandemic.

Disgraced ex-MP got contract from Hancock

HEALTH secretary Matt Hancock personally intervened to help a shamed former Tory minister land a contract worth nearly £180 million.

Hancock insists that Brooks Newmark received no special treatment as he brokered a deal for international firms to supply millions of pairs of goggles to the NHS last year.

Newmark quit as minister for civil society in 2014.

He was exposed as sending explicit messages to a "female party activist" who was in fact a male undercover reporter who was posing as a female.

National Audit Office emails show that last May, at the height

of the first Covid-19 lockdown, he lobbied the government on behalf of a Hong Kong firm.

After a string of email exchanges with Hancock and his senior aides the company was awarded a £178 million deal in June.

Brooks Nemark

MPs to vote to save Johnson's holidays

TORY MPs have vowed to prevent Boris Johnson from being suspended from the Commons over a "freebie" holiday in Mustique—by rejecting the verdict of Westminster's standards watchdog.

They are threatening to vote down the sanction if Kathryn Stone, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, calls for it.

One senior Tory said the prime minister's "mandate from the British people" could not be overturned by a standards inquiry.

Stone had accused Johnson of failing to come clean over the real cost of his holiday in December 2019. She

suggested it was twice as much as the £15,000 he declared in the Commons register of interests.

She also suggested that the cost had not been met by Tory donor and Carphone Warehouse co-founder David Ross, as Johnson claimed.

Johnson in Mustique

Cameron 'just does' corruption

DAVID CAMERON was strangely unwilling to reveal the size of his Greensill pay packet in two appearances before Commons committees last week.

But he did at least have the decency to answer a question of why does he text like that?

He was asked at the Treasury committee why he had signed off his lobbying messages to just about everyone in government—apart from Michael Gove—with "Love Dc". Cameron said, "With anyone I know even at all well, I tend to sign off text messages with 'Love Dc'. I don't know why, I just do."

What else does an ex-prime minister with a gig for a finance giant "just do", then?

Cameron reluctantly disclosed details of the perks, pay and share options he received while lobbying ministers on behalf of the company.

He admitted that from time to time he had enjoyed the use of the firm's private jet to whisk him away to his Cornwall holiday home.

Tory minister Nadhim Zahawi said, "I think clearly this was a painful period for him it cannot be easy for a prime minister to go through this," he said.

"It's a difficult time for him and I think we should respect that as well."

Cameron's private company, the Office of David Cameron, filed accounts in January 2020.

They revealed that as of April 2019 the firm—which is supported with a publicly funded grant—had £873,821 in net assets.

As well as his lucrative position at Greensill, he has raked in cash for speeches—charging as much as £120,000 an hour.

And his book deal was worth a reported £800,000.

He probably has around £35 million.

He just does.

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‘This criminality has no limits’—Palestinian in Gaza

by NICK CLARK

ISRAEL'S CONTINUED assault on the Gaza Strip is causing “unprecedented horror,” a Palestinian living under the bombs has told Socialist Worker.

In the early hours of last Monday morning some 50 air strikes lasted for ten minutes. This followed deadly bombing 24 hours before.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the violence at “full force”.

According to the Gaza health ministry, 192 Palestinians have been killed including 58 children.

Salma, who lives in the besieged strip of land, said the bombardment has been even worse than Israel's assault in 2014.

Israel also pounded Gaza with airstrikes and shells last Thursday night, forcing Palestinians living close to the border to flee.

More than 830 Palestinians were injured that night alone. And some 200 homes and 24 schools were destroyed by Israel's bombs in the five days prior.

“Most people I know in Gaza thought they were going to die,” said Salma. “Everybody was surprised when it was over at the end of the night. In only 40 minutes a huge number of people were killed and injured.”

She added, “They wait for night to come and then they start their indiscriminate bombing on civilians. They don't do such crimes in the day because they feel more comfortable when they bomb people in the dark.”

“The horror and terror are in everyone's hearts.”

Salma said the bombings were different to those in 2014, when Israel sometimes gave warnings before striking a building.

“In 2014 they made some attacks on civilians,” she said. “Now all the attacks are on civilians. In 2014 they

GAZA IS under threat from continued Israeli bombing

fired warning rockets or even called by phone before striking houses.

“Now they don't give any alarm before destroying houses. They don't care if it's full of inhabitants. This criminality has no limits.”

Salma said, “Near the border in the east of the Gaza Strip they're using shells from tanks. These fall randomly on the people who live nearby.”

Israeli defence minister Benny Gantz was the general in charge of the assault in 2014, which killed more than 2,000 Palestinians.

Earlier last week he threatened, “If Hamas does not stop its violence, the strike of 2021 will be harder and more painful than that of 2014.”

Salma said, “In 2014 all Gaza was traumatised. When we hear thunder in winter we're scared because it sounds like bombing.”

“People in Gaza have not recovered, and people who lost their homes have not found shelter until now.”

“They are suffering from the economic situation in Gaza, which is a catastrophe.”

“Unemployment in Gaza is the highest in the world—people cannot find an income. Then, in these very dark situations, people here can despair.”

“People feel that being dead can be better than living in such a way.”

After attacks last weekend

Gaza last Monday

Biden and Benjamin Netanyahu

Biden stuck firmly to US backing Israel

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden made it clear this week that he will continue, like his predecessor Donald Trump, in unwavering support for Israel.

A delegation from the US blocked a United Nations security council statement three times in support of a ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian resistance groups.

In comments made last Wednesday Biden said that Israel's murderous retaliation to Hamas rockets had “not been a significant overreaction”.

Biden added, “Israel has a right to defend itself when you have thousands of rockets flying into your territory.”

But Biden's stance on Israel is facing at least some opposition from sections of the Democratic Party, including representatives such as Rashida Tlaib and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Significant

This is a significant shift, as not so long ago even mentioning the word Palestine was almost taboo inside the Democrats.

And wider sections of US society look to be detaching themselves from support from Israel.

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center last week showed the US Jews are becoming more sceptical of Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu's leadership.

It also found that only 34 percent strongly oppose sanctions on Israel.

Former Israeli ambassador Ron Dermer said that the Israeli government should start to look to evangelical Christians for support of Israel.

Dermer added that he thought US Jews were now “disproportionately among our [Israel's] critics.”

It is clear that Biden will continue his strong support for Israel—which he has displayed for his entire political career.

But there are those who are becoming increasingly prepared to challenge him.

Sophie Squire

Socialist Worker

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SALMA FROM Gaza called on people in Britain to “be part of the movement” in solidarity with Palestinians.

“I hope people in Britain can understand that Palestinians have a twisted image in the media,” she said.

“Israel tries to pretend it is threatened by the Palestinian rockets.”

“They try to portray things as if it is a war between two equal parties.”

“I'm a victim—don't act like I'm a criminal. Palestinians are just

defending ourselves. “How could you expect me to be peaceful and say, please come in and take my home? It is asking us to be something other than human.”

Salma added, “Israel acts very comfortably without any pressure.”

“The absence of international pressure makes Israel more able to do criminal things to the Palestinians.”

“That's why I want people in Britain to be part of the movement for the Palestinian people.”



100,000 join march for Palestine in London

Sam Ord and Nick Clark report on the angry and militant protests in support of Palestinian resistance

CHANTS OF “Israel is a terror state” filled the streets of central London on Saturday as 100,000 angry protesters marched in solidarity with Palestinians fighting Israel’s military might.

The protest followed Israeli settlers’ attempted eviction of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah, east Jerusalem, cops’ attacks on Al Aqsa mosque and airstrikes on Gaza.

By Monday morning, Israeli forces had killed at least 192 Palestinians, including 58 children, in Gaza. Palestinian protests have been met with police brutality, tear gas and rubber bullets.

Aysha, who travelled from Cambridge to the London protest, told Socialist Worker, “We need to amplify the voice of the Palestinians. Seeing the terror on social media over the last few days has turned me into an activist—this is my first protest.

Killed

“Children have been killed during Ramadan yet the news ignores it.”

Protesters vowed to keep up the pressure on the British government—and its arms sales to Israel. Huda, who travelled from Sunderland, told Socialist Worker, “My heart is broken, I see my brothers and sisters oppressed by Israel’s

crimes. I stand in solidarity and demand that the occupation of Palestine ends. Britain is complicit. Boris Johnson must see the protests and feel pressured to end arms sales to Israel.

“We need to make more noise and keep protesting.”

The protest was called on the anniversary of the Nakba, or catastrophe. It saw Zionist paramilitaries, which would go on to form the Israeli army, ethnically cleanse around 850,000 Palestinians as part of the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948.

Racism

College student Jihan told Socialist Worker, “The racism Palestinians face every day in Israel must be opposed.

“Children are being killed and families are separated.”

Western media portrays Israeli apartheid and occupation as the “Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

But protestor Wali said this is a “false narrative”—and hit out at supporters of Israel who try to smear the Palestine solidarity movement.

“When people resist colonialism in Palestine they are labelled antisemitic,” he told Socialist Worker.

“It’s ridiculous as we’re against Israel, not Judaism.” Outside the



ANGRY PROTESTERS in London

Israeli embassy in west London, Kate Hudson, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament general secretary, addressed the crowd.

“There is endless talk in the media of Israel’s right to defend itself,” she said. “When do they ever talk about the right of Palestinian self defence?”

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign called the demonstration alongside other organisations.

It said, “The British government must take immediate action and stop allowing Israel to act with impunity.

“It must demand an end to current proceedings to evict these families, and start holding Israel accountable

for all its actions which contribute to the crime of apartheid.

“In the face of Israel’s brutal crimes, we can’t remain silent.”

The magnificent and vibrant demonstration in London was young and militant, with many Muslim protesters, especially young women.

For five years Israel’s supporters have smeared the Palestinian movement as antisemitic while the Labour Party constantly retreated over the question. But now the movement is back on the streets with renewed confidence.

It’s on the streets that the movement has its strength.

Protesters were determined to stand against Israel’s crimes and its Western backers—and are taking hope from the Palestinian resistance that’s burst forth.

The PSC, and other organisations, have called a national demonstration in London this Saturday 22 May.

It will be another day of rage and resistance at Israeli colonialism and apartheid. A new era of resistance, challenging the Israeli state and traditional Palestinian political forces has burst forth.

We need a higher level of militant resistance in Britain too.

Thousands join protests across Britain

THERE WERE large protests in almost every part of Britain—many loud, dynamic and with a life of their own.

One activist in Birmingham, Hope, estimated there were at least 2,500 people. “People split off in all directions,” said Hope.

“It went off on a bit of an impromptu march that went through the Bull Ring shopping centre.

“It shut the shopping centre down” There was a similar atmosphere in Manchester, where at least 1,000 people joined a

protest beginning in a park in Rusholme, with hundreds breaking off for several splinter marches.

Up to 1,000 people protested for hours in Cardiff.

Young Muslim people took charge of the demo and tried to lead it on a march to the BBC headquarters.

Some 1,200 people gathered for a rally outside Sheffield town hall—the second big demonstration in the city in a week.

There were also around 1,000 in Nottingham and 1,500 in Derby.

Richard, who joined the protest in Nottingham said it “evoked the feeling from 2014 after the invasion of Gaza.”

Organisers reported 1,500 joined an action in Newcastle. Protesters held on long marches in Edinburgh and Brighton.

And there were loud and angry protests in Coventry, Newcastle, Bournemouth and Cambridge.

On Sunday thousands protested in Glasgow and over 500 in Swansea.

For full reports go to bit.ly/SWreport150521



The demonstration in Glasgow

PICTURE: ANDREW MCGOWAN



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Palestinian revolt spreads in West Bank

THE PALESTINIAN revolt spread across the West Bank on Friday, while Israel sent troops to crack down in protests inside its own borders.

Palestinians have also reported that Israel is attempting to clamp down on those are trying to tell the world about their crimes on social media.

One Palestinian news source reported protests took place in more than 200 places across the West Bank. The protests were met with fierce repression by the occupying Israeli military.

There was a major protest in Bethlehem, and in other cities including Tulkarem, Qalqilya and Hebron.

Protests then continued throughout the day and there was fierce resistance to Israeli repression near Bethlehem.

Israel Defence Forces (IDF) soldiers reacted with brutality using rubber coated metal bullets, stun grenades and tear gas canisters.

Soldiers killed at least 11 Palestinians in the West Bank on Friday.

The Red Crescent reported that the ambulance service treated at least 1,757 injuries, including 201 in Bethlehem.

The protests in the West Bank are the latest sign that the revolt—which began with mass protests in Jerusalem last weekend has the power to spread.

Resistance is being felt beyond the borders

THERE WERE protests in solidarity at the borders in neighbouring countries Lebanon and Jordan. Some protesters at both demonstrations crossed the border. Israeli soldiers shot and killed one protester at the border with Lebanon.

Thousands of people also protested in Jordan's capital city, Amman.

The revolt in Palestine began as protesters resisted attempts to evict Palestinian families in Jerusalem to make way for Israeli settlers. It spread to cities inside Israel's "official" borders, as Palestinian citizens of Israel marched in solidarity.

The protests have shaken Israel's politicians and generals, who say they are more of a threat than rockets fired by resistance groups in Gaza.

Defence minister Benny Gantz approved the transfer of weapons usually used in the occupied territories—such as M16 assault rifles—to the cities in Israel.

Netanyahu also told border



Solidarity in Jordan

police not to worry about facing investigations or disciplinary hearings.

"We hear talk of apprehension over commissions of inquiry, investigations, inspections—we will give you all the tools to protect yourself and the citizens of Israel," he said.

"You have our full backing, do not be afraid."

Yet Israel's increasing violence only seems to be encouraging Palestinians to fight back—wherever they are.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

BRITAIN PLAYS VITAL ROLE IN ISRAEL'S CRIMES

BRITAIN IS complicit in Israel's murder of Palestinians—and that's not just because of arms sales.

Arms deals with Israel are certainly lucrative. Britain has licensed over £400 million in arms sales to Israel since 2015. And the real figure is certain to be higher.

The equipment includes components for assault rifles, drones and warplanes, all used in attacks on Palestinians. But Britain doesn't care. It doesn't apply any "end use" conditions on the deals, meaning that Israel is free to use the equipment however it likes.

But the relationship goes deeper.

Britain and Israel's armies collaborate including in the training of each other's soldiers.

In 2011, British soldiers were trained in Israel on the use of drones that had been "field tested on Palestinians".

British pilots have since received training in a programme partly run by Israeli arms firm Elbit Systems.

In 2019, Israeli military officers were trained in "amphibious warfare" at the Royal Navy's largest

training school HMS Collingwood.

The two armies also take part in military exercises together, simulating war. Israeli F-15 fighter jets took part in training exercises out of RAF Waddington airbase, also in 2019, including "simulated ground attacks."

In other words, Israeli warplanes practised airstrikes out of an RAF base in Britain.

That same summer, the Royal Navy took part in Israel's largest ever international naval exercise.

The exercise took place in the Mediterranean, close to the shore of the Gaza Strip, where Israel's navy helps to enforce the siege on Palestinians living there. There are politics behind all this. The



British pilots have received training in a programme run by Israeli firms

cooperation makes sure Britain keeps a cosy relationship with Israel, and a seat at the table with the US.

Britain's military strategy, published in March, described Israel as a "key strategic partner." It always has been.

When the British Empire occupied Palestine in the first half of the 20th century it used the Zionist colonisers, who aimed to establish Israel, to help it police Palestinians.

Israel plays a similar role for the US today. The US plies it with billions of dollars of military aid because, in its own words, Israel is "a vital partner in the region."

Israel helps the US to maintain its power in the Middle East—and its military strength is crucial to that. Britain, hanging on to the US's coattails joins in.

That's why US calls for a "ceasefire" can't be trusted if it means returning to Israel's dominance over Palestinians.

Victory for the Palestinians means supporting their resistance against Israel, and the US's system of control in the Middle East.

We can back them by fighting to end Britain's guilty role in all of that too.

CLASS AND COVID EXPOSURE

A NEW Office for National Statistics report this week underlined how class has largely determined how much you were exposed to Covid-19.

The survey asked whether people had worked from home in the week before the survey, and if they had ever worked from home, at any point.

The results showed that in 2020 only 25.9 percent of people had worked at home in the week before they responded.

For many people "stay at home" would have meant the sack, or at

the very least a significant loss of income. In London 46.4 percent of people said they worked at home at some point in 2020, with the highest proportion in richer neighbourhoods.

Some 71 percent of workers in Richmond upon Thames had worked from home before.

But in rural Scotland and the northern English towns of Burnley and Middlesbrough, less than 14 percent of workers had ever worked from home.

During the lockdown, more than half of managers, directors

and senior officials worked from home. But fewer than 10 percent of cleaners, factory workers and drivers did. Most were left fully exposed to high risks.

Home workers in their 40s were twice as likely to be working from home than those aged 20-24.

And black workers or those from Bangladesh or Pakistan were also less likely to do their jobs at home. Class ruled how much your life was at risk—even though working class people did the crucial jobs that kept society going throughout the pandemic.

Breakfast in



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ANALYSIS
NICK CLARK

Lydd and Ramle at centre of resistance

ISRAELI GANGS have rampaged through the streets of Palestinian towns and cities chanting, “Death to Arabs.”

Some of the most vicious violence by Israelis—and the fiercest protests by Palestinians—has been in the cities of Lydd and Ramle, known as Lod and Ramla by Israel.

Meanwhile, media reports and politicians have called Palestinian protesters “Arab mobs”. Lydd’s mayor described the Palestinian protests as a “pogrom”.

In fact it is Palestinians in Lydd and Ramle who have faced decades of brutal racist violence designed to drive them out and keep them a minority.

Lydd and Ramle were the sites of two of the largest mass expulsions of Palestinians when Israel was created in 1948.

In the original partition plan that split Palestine in two, Lydd and Ramle were supposed to be part of a new Palestinian state. But when Britain, which occupied Palestine, left in 1948, Israel’s founders waged a campaign to take Palestinian land by force—and drive Palestinians out.

Israel’s founder David Ben Gurion had written that Israel’s borders would be “determined by force and not by the partition resolution”.

But he also wanted to make sure that Palestinians were a clear minority in any land that Israel occupied—“Only a state with at least 80 percent Jews is a viable and stable state.”

Yitzhak Rabin, who years later became Israel’s prime minister, was appointed by Ben Gurion as one of the commanders in charge of invading Lydd and Ramle.

In a diary entry revealed by the New York Times, he wrote of how he asked Ben Gurion what to do with the 50,000 surrendering Palestinians. “Ben Gurion waved his hand in a gesture that said: ‘Drive them out!’”

Israeli soldiers entering Lydd massacred 426 Palestinians—men, women and children—on the first day of the assault. The following day they went house to house and marched tens of thousands of Palestinians out of the city and towards the West Bank.

Invited

Journalists from the Chicago Sun-Times and the New York Herald Tribune—apparently invited to watch by Israeli forces—described the killing.

“Practically everything in their way died. Riddled corpses lay by the roadside,” wrote one. The other reported seeing “the corpses of Arab men, women and even children strewn about in the wake of the ruthlessly brilliant charge.”

Spiro Munayaer, who lived in Lydd at the time, remembered, “During the night the soldiers began going into houses in the areas they had occupied, rounding up the population and expelling them from the city.”

“The streets were filled with people going to indeterminate destinations.”

News of the massacre in Lydd encouraged Palestinians in nearby Ramle to surrender. They were also driven out and made to march without food or water towards the West Bank.

Israel has never allowed those refugees to return. The Palestinians who live there today are the descendants of the few hundred who escaped expulsion. Although Israel gives them citizenship, it has made sure they remain an impoverished, segregated minority.

As the proportion of Palestinians in Lydd grew slowly in recent years, the Israeli state has backed efforts to keep them a minority.

Israeli settlers—whose focus is normally on building towns in the occupied West Bank—moved into the centre of Lydd.

The Israeli government sold the settlers the land for an incredibly cheap price in 2003, and backed them in building a well-developed neighbourhood.

Nearby Arab neighbourhoods have been kept impoverished, with their residents denied the opportunity to move out. The government built walls designed to keep Israeli and Palestinian neighbourhoods separate.

Now, right wing Israelis have again launched house to house attacks on Palestinians, in an echo of the army’s ethnic cleansing methods of 1948. Meanwhile, politicians and commentators wring their hands at the breakdown of “co-existence” in the “mixed cities.”

The reality is Palestinians have lived for decades under an apartheid regime. The attacks on them are part of that racist system—and the Palestinian protests are the resistance.

Israeli police back right wing settler violence

ISRAELI POLICE have stood by as armed, right wing Jewish settlers run riot through Palestinian towns and neighbourhoods inside Israel’s borders.

Sawsan Zaher, deputy director of the Adalah legal centre in Haifa, told Socialist Worker how groups of Israeli settlers have organised assaults on Palestinian demonstrations.

Sawsan said Palestinians in Israel began protesting after border cops attacked worshippers in the Al Aqsa mosque, Jerusalem, last week. “Instead of allowing them to protest peacefully, the police started using violence, attacking demonstrations and arresting activists,” she said.

Groups of settler activists—Israelis who try to force Palestinians from their land to make way for Jewish-only towns—soon joined the attacks.

Adalah, which defends the human rights of Palestinians in Israel, obtained voice messages. They showed settlers arranging for busloads of activists to join the assault.

“380 people—everyone with weapons,” one settler says. “Every one of them dying to kill Palestinians. They want to kill Arabs.”

Sawsan said Israeli police did nothing to stop them. “The police enabled extreme right wing settlers to enter Arab towns in a very organised way,” she said.

“We started to monitor the operation by the settlers. We started to see that during the demonstrations of the Palestinian citizens which were peaceful, the settlers

were standing near the police officers.

“At some point you would see tens and even hundreds of settlers arriving from the direction of the police officers and starting to attack Palestinian demonstrators.”

She added, “At no point would you see any kind of action to stop the attacks by the police. But you would see only police violence towards Palestinian demonstrators.”

Gangs

Settler gangs then began marching through Palestinian neighbourhoods, beating Arabs and marking out homes and buildings for future attacks.

“The police officers were behind them and accompanying them,” said Sawsan. “We have testimonies from three young girls attacked near their house in Haifa. They called the police and the police didn’t arrive.

“We have also seen a new phenomenon where they are marking the houses of Arabs so that they will be identified to be attacked later.” In Lydd, the Israeli government imposed a state of “emergency” which allowed them to stop entry and exit from the city and a curfew from 8pm. Then, after curfew, settlers marched into town to attack the mosques.

Young Palestinians came out to defend themselves and the mosques—and were arrested and beaten by cops.

It’s a very different picture to the stories of “inter-communal violence” or “rioting Arabs” told in much of the press.

Sawsan said, “The Israeli

media is misrepresenting the situation. Describing the situation as if it is Arabs attacking Jews without really covering the organised extreme violence by the settlers.”



Israeli forces in Lydd

Legislation legitimises discrimination

ISRAELI politicians claim they treat Arab citizens equally to Jews.

The state and settlers attacks on Palestinians show this is a lie.

Sawsan highlighted that Israeli politicians have encouraged attacks on Palestinians by arming the police and blaming Arabs for violence.

“All these actions are backed up by the politicians,” she said. “Prime minister Netanyahu is inciting against the Arabs. He even called the actions of Arabs terrorism. “It’s not communal

violence it is a war against Arab citizens of Israel.”

Sawsan linked the assaults to Israel’s 2018 nation state law which confirms only Jews have the right to self-determination in Israel.

Sawsan said, “It imposed a constitutional identity of Jewish supremacy on everyone. This gives legitimacy to discrimination.

“So what we see now is shocking, and we are all afraid. But it is not surprising because now it’s constitutional.”

FIGURE IT OUT

850,000

Palestinians forcibly removed from their homes in 1948 to make way for the new state of Israel.

6,106

Palestinians shot and injured by Israeli snipers during the 2018 great march of return

4,236

Palestinian security prisoners serving terms in Israeli prisons

Binyamin Netanyahu

Tories ignore new virus risk to ease Covid rules

BORIS JOHNSON is once again ready to plunge us into grave coronavirus danger.

Despite the threat posed by the spread of the B.1.617.2 “Indian variant” of the virus, the Tories this week stuck to plans to further ease lockdown measures.

The government ignored scientists’ warnings that Covid-19 infections caused by the variant could lead to a surge in hospital admissions, particularly among young adults.

Instead, it said that from this week pubs and cafes will be allowed to serve customers indoors and indoor entertainment venues can reopen. School pupils will also no longer need to wear masks in the classroom.

Many public health experts warned against the measures. Professor Andrew Hayward, a member of the government’s own Nerve tag virus taskforce, said the relaxations would drive up the number of infections.

“Indoor mixing will almost certainly increase transmission of the B.1.617.2 variant but at this stage nobody can be sure by how much,” he said.

The Indian variant is thought to be easier to transmit than the Kent variant which has been the dominant strain in Britain for most of 2021.

But scientists cannot say just how much more infectious it is, and estimates range between 20 and 50 percent.

Huge

“A 20 percent increase in transmissibility is not a big problem,” Hayward said. But, “A 40 percent increase would be a huge problem and could lead to a sizeable surge in hospitalisations.

“A big surge in hospitalisations would likely have knock-on consequences for routine health services and the backlog of care.”

While evidence so far suggests existing vaccines are effective against the Indian variant, those who are not yet vaccinated are in danger.

Reports from doctors in India suggest that many more young people were hospitalised during India’s current second wave than last year’s first wave.

Experts from the Independent Sage group said this week’s relaxations should be postponed—at least until the risks of the Indian variant have been properly analysed.

Ministers’ own criteria for ending restrictions include ensuring that the risk of infections has not been changed by the arrival of a new variant.

“At this point the precautionary principle should kick in,” said Dr Kit Yates, of the Independent Sage group.

“The more people we can vaccinate, the safer we become. Even a couple of weeks at this



NEWSPAPERS CELEBRATED easing restrictions—but will blame ordinary people if it all goes wrong

point could make a huge difference in the face of this seemingly more transmissible variant.

“A pause would also buy us time to understand more about the properties of the variant, which would put us in a better position to plan what comes next.”

Few will be surprised by Boris Johnson’s laid back response to the threat. He is the prime minister who was prepared to “let the bodies pile high in their thousands”.

But Labour’s weak opposition meant it concentrated its fire on how long borders with India remained open.

Instead, what was needed a furious tirade against Johnson for once again putting the needs of business and its profits ahead of people’s lives.



On other pages...

What does it mean to be working class? >>Pages 14&15

Don’t be fooled by inquiry

BORIS JOHNSON has been forced to announce a public inquiry into the government’s handling of the pandemic.

The move reflects growing anger among ordinary people over Tory mishandling of the pandemic and a clamour for the government to be held to account. But there are big dangers.

It isn’t clear what the remit or scope of the inquiry will be.

It may exclude some areas of the government’s response from scrutiny.

It won’t even begin until perhaps a year’s time from now—and who knows how long it will take to complete. This will give Johnson

more time to justify avoiding answering awkward questions.

For instance, former Tory adviser Dominic Cummings is due to give evidence later this month to an MPs’ committee on the government’s handling of the virus.

But when Johnson is called before the committee, he will be able to say he’s unable to comment on specifics due to the impending inquiry.

Johnson hopes talk of an inquiry can offset some of the anger.

He wants to pose as someone who is taking the pandemic seriously.

In reality, he’s looking after his own back.

Met cops investigated for reading Everard files

MORE THAN 30 Metropolitan police officers could be facing disciplinary action for looking up details of the abduction and murder of Sarah Everard.

Cops used the police computer systems without permission or authorisation to find information about Everard’s disappearance and details about the arrest of PC Wayne Couzens.

Everard disappeared from

Sarah Everard

Clapham Common, south London, on 3 March and her remains were later found in Kent. Couzens was arrested for kidnap and murder, but his identity was kept anonymous.

The Met police Directorate of Professional Standards has launched an investigation into the leak of his details. It is currently questioning 35 people

Police at the vigil in Clapham

about why they accessed the files.

Accessing police records without authority can lead to criminal charges for misconduct.

Couzens is due to stand trial in October.

A vigil held after Everard was confirmed to be dead was called at Clapham Common.

Met police officers broke it up, violently attacking those who attended.

Last week Met chief Cressida Dick revealed she had considered an all-female squad to police the vigil.

But female police are no less oppressive or violent than male police.

The police are institutionally sexist and racist regardless of which officers patrol peaceful vigils.



Protests in Colombia continue to rock state

Tax rises have forced thousands to take to the streets in defiance of repression, explains **Sophie Squire**

ANGRY PROTESTERS have taken to the streets in Colombia for the third week in a row despite brutal repression.

Human rights organisations claim there have been over 40 killings by state forces, denying the government figure of 14.

Protests began after right wing President Ivan Duque announced plans to raise taxes on essential items.

Trade unions quickly called on people to join the mass protests on 28 April against these plans. Four days later Duque offered price subsidies on some goods to offset the tax rises.

Some protest organisers wanted at this point to declare victory, but this was rejected by student leaders.

The protests have now broadened into opposition against poverty, police violence and the government's handling of Covid-19.

Trade unions and farmers' organisations have called a series of national strikes. But they have not yet involved the crucial oil and gas sectors.

At the start of the protests, some of the fiercest opposition was found in the country's capital Bogota and the city of Cali. But angry protests have now spread to every corner of the country.

In the city of Popayan, the suicide of a young woman abused at the hands of the police caused fresh waves of anger.

In a social media post before her death, the woman wrote that she was walking to a friend's house when the police detained her.

She was later picked up by her grandmother covered in bruises.

Prosecution

Upon her death furious protesters clashed with the police, throwing petrol bombs at the city prosecutor's office and burning down a police post.

In the town of Jamundi protesters set fire to the municipal headquarters and in Pereira, activists held actions on a road to

BACK STORY

Militant protests and strikes flooded Colombia following right wing president, Ivan Duque's plans to raise taxes on essential items.

● Over 40 people have been murdered by the police since the protests began on 1 May, International Workers Day

● Despite a small victory when Duque offered price subsidies on some goods to compensate for the tax rises, protests continue to mobilise around broader issues such as austerity

demand justice for student Lucas Villa. Villa was shot eight times by the police while protesting at the start of the month.

Thousands of students in Bucaramanga fought back against the police armed only with shields made of rubbish bins and umbrellas.

In Cali, protesters constructed blockades that halted the delivery of goods to the city.

Monument

Saturday was a day of relative peace for protesters in the city of Bogota as hundreds of protesters gathered at the Los Heroes monument.

Many carried placards reading "no more repression against protests".

Protests in Colombia are unlikely to end any time soon. They're managing to attract broad sections of society from students to LGBT+ people as well as the indigenous population.

Unions have continued to play an important role in calling protests but more workers must join to deepen the movement. Wider sections of workers calling for more strikes have the power to beat Colombia's right wing government.



On other pages...

Cities left with no plans to combat climate change >>> **Page 16**

THOUSANDS OF Colombians took to the streets last week despite a wave of repression

PICTURE: OXI.AP

Myanmar regime using human shields

THE MYANMAR military have used arrested civilians as "human shields" as they fought to retake the rebel town of Mindat.

Soldiers raided the town set in the mountains of Chin State, in the north west of the country, on Saturday last week.

Rebel democracy fighters held Mindat for several weeks, but in recent days there had been fierce fighting with the military—with shootouts lasting from dawn until dusk.

"We could not fight back while our people were being arrested and used as human shields," one fighter told the Irrawaddy news site.

"They fired with artillery and

continued to attack us," he said.

With the town defenceless, the army deployed thousands more troops.

Now inhabitants live in fear of sweeping arrests as punishment for standing against the regime.

But the attack was met with resistance elsewhere, with rebels attacking military vehicles travelling to Mindat using single-shot hunting rifles.

They killed some 20 soldiers, captured six armoured vehicles and a weapons cache.

The continued fighting is proof that the popular uprising against military rule is far from spent.

Yuri Prasad

Myanmar—opposing state violence

FIGURE IT OUT

639

protesters and bystanders, including at least 44 children have been killed by the Myanmar military following the military coup

3,778

people have been arrested for daring to stand up and oppose the brutality

100

Days since the February coup

Thousands defy France ban

TENS OF thousands of people marched for Palestine in France on Saturday in defiance of state bans.

Disgracefully, interior minister Gerald Darmanin said the marches would lead to "antisemitic attacks". It is part of a crackdown on protests and Muslims.

In Strasbourg there were more than 4,000 despite

a ban on one of the two demonstrations planned and nearly 2,000 in Marseille. Gatherings were also held in Bordeaux, Toulouse, Metz, Nantes, Rennes, Nancy and Saint-Etienne.

In Nice and Grenoble, where demonstrations were prohibited, several hundred people gathered.

Around 4,000

protesters gathered in the Barbes neighbourhood in the north of Paris where they were met by 4,200 police.

For several hours, police charged protesters and used water cannons and tear gas.

But demonstrators stuck together, held a combative protest, and defended themselves from the cops.

Palestinians protesting in the city of Nazareth last week. They are angry at the racism they experience in Israel—and the way Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are kept in the equivalent of an ‘open prison’

IT'S RIGHT TO RESIST

ISRAEL'S BLOODY ASSAULT IS NOT 'SELF-DEFENCE'

Palestinians in Gaza face bombardment while those living inside Israel's borders have suffered murderous attacks. Israel's latest assault has exposed it as a racist, violent state. Palestinians who resist are challenging that oppression. People who say 'both sides' must end violence are really siding with the oppressor, argues Nick Clark

TWO QUOTES from the past week sum up the regime of violence that Israel forces on Palestinians. The first was a chant by Israelis tearing through Palestinian neighbourhoods—“Death to Arabs.” That's the murderous hatred towards Palestinians by Israelis who for more than 70 years have driven them from their homes.

The second was a threat by defence minister Benny Gantz to resistance groups in Gaza. “Israel is not preparing for a ceasefire,” Gantz said. “Only when there is complete quiet can we talk about calm.”

That's the punishment for Palestinians who dare to fight back—bombed into silence. And that's why it's obscene to talk of Israel's “right to defend itself” while calling for “an end to violence on both sides”.

In practice it means siding with Gantz—denying Palestinians the right to resist, and granting Israel the right to bomb them into submission if they do.

It also means ignoring the source of the violence. As Israel's history shows, it is



Israeli bombs hit tower block in Gaza last week

founded on racism and violence towards Arabs designed to keep them in a ghettoised minority (see page 11). Its dependence on its role as the US's enforcer in the Middle East has made it a highly militarised society.

Palestinians have no choice over the fact that, for them, violence is a fact of life.

Inside Israel's borders they face discrimination, poverty and harassment by Israeli citizens and police.

Devastating

In the Gaza Strip, there are young Palestinian adults who have grown up under siege. In the 14 years since Israel first imposed its blockade, it has pounded Gaza with countless airstrikes and waged three devastating wars. The latest assault looks set to become the fourth.

And in east Jerusalem and the West Bank, Palestinians live under a repressive Israeli military regime. Soldiers restrict their movement with checkpoints, raid their houses, and protect the settlers who attack them.

Palestinian academic and activist Mark Muhannad Ayyash described growing up



Cops arrest Palestinian protester earlier this month

under the constant threat of violence in an article for Al Jazeera last week.

“We would regularly be confronted with armed Israeli civilians walking around with their guns out in the open, asserting their supremacy, reminding us that we ought not to look at them the wrong way or else,” he wrote.

“Conversations between us children would turn to stories we heard about torture methods that the Israelis use, the beating a friend or relative took at the hands of Israeli soldiers, an armed Israeli civilian cursing and spitting on a Palestinian, the long imprisonment and suffering of relatives and friends.

“Certainly things seem worse today than they were in those days. Nevertheless, those days and stories pile up one on top of the other, along with experiences of violent acts and events, building and instilling in Palestinians a state of fear.”

Throughout their history, many Palestinians have decided that, rather than living in a state of fear, they're going to resist. Whenever—and however—they do resist, they're met with brutal and often lethal repression that makes violence not only justified, but

necessary. When Palestinians are shot down for protesting, as thousands were in Gaza during mass protests in 2018, it is hypocrisy to demand they be peaceful.

Israel is not “defending itself” when it bombs Gaza or shoots down protesters—it is enforcing a system of violent oppression. When Palestinians fight back, they are challenging that oppression.

They have the right to do so—with rocks or with rockets.

Armed resistance has been heroic—but limited

PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE has taken different forms throughout its history.

There have been mass protests, uprisings and strikes. And there have also been heroic campaigns of armed struggle aimed at inflicting defeats on Israel's military, which had popular support.

There is an important difference between the two—but it's not whether resistance is violent or non-violent. And often the different struggles are linked.

For instance, when Palestinian resistance groups in Gaza began launching rockets last week, they said it was in defence of protesters in Jerusalem.

Yet it wasn't the rockets that terrified the Israeli state.

It was the fact that the protests in Jerusalem threatened to spread across Palestine, including inside Israel's

>>Continued on next page

IT'S RIGHT TO RESIST

>>Continued from previous page

borders. There's a striking difference between the Israeli politicians' bloodcurdling threats against Gaza and their desperate pleas to rein in Israeli gangs in Lydd and Ramle.

On the same day that Gantz threatened, "Gaza will burn" he also warned, "Our internal divisions are what threaten us. We must not win the battle in Gaza and lose the battle at home."

Israel's politicians don't care more for Palestinians with Israeli citizenship than for those in the Gaza Strip.

For decades Palestinians in Israel have been brutalised by an Israeli police force that considers them an enemy within.

But now Palestinian protesters have them rattled. Israel's politicians and generals know that protests can become uprisings that spread to every part of Palestine—and take years to put down.

They are much more confident that they can contain armed struggle.

That's not just because Israel's military is more powerful by far than the resistance groups it faces.

In fact, armed resistance has inflicted some humiliating defeats on Israel in the past.

In 2006, Israel invaded Lebanon claiming it would crush the armed Lebanese movement Hizbollah. Weeks later, Hizbollah's guerrilla fighters—rooted in mass popular support among ordinary people—had forced Israel to retreat.

And in 2014, Israel ended its all-out war in Gaza—which killed 2,251 Palestinians—after seven weeks without inflicting a decisive defeat on Hamas.

Tactic

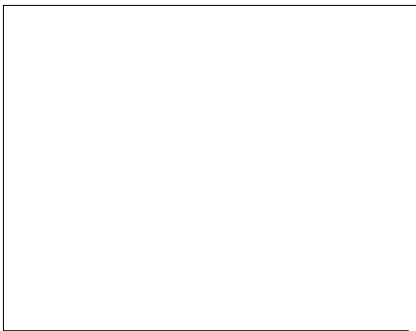
Yet armed struggle has never come close to ending the occupation or Israel's apartheid regime.

Resistance groups use armed struggle as a tactic to force Israel, and the US and its other Middle East allies, into negotiations and concessions.

They want to force the US and Israel to accommodate them as leaders of a Palestinian state. This leads them to make concessions of their own. In the 1970s, the Palestine Liberation Organisation



The PLO were tempted by the idea of a 'mini state' alongside Israel



Yasser Arafat's PLO retreated from struggle

(PLO) waged armed struggle against the occupation. Their plan was a national liberation struggle to set up a Palestinian state much like other Arab states in the region.

They relied on the support of those Arab states, which they hoped could be drawn into war on their behalf.

The problem was that many of those rulers had ties with the US and Britain, which dominated the Middle East.

So the PLO was careful not to challenge them—which meant keeping Palestinian resistance in check.

Consequence

Arab rulers sometimes found the PLO useful—but also turned against it. In Jordan, where the PLO grew so powerful it became a rival power to the state, the regime carried out a massacre of Palestinians.

More and more, the PLO began looking for ways to be accepted as legitimate negotiating partners with Israel.

One big consequence of this was that they came to abandon the goal of reclaiming all Palestinian land. Instead, they were tempted by the promise of a "mini-state" alongside Israel.

In 1993, the PLO renounced armed struggle in favour of a "peace process" that promised them that state. In reality, the deal it led to left them under the thumb of Israel.

Hamas and other Islamist groups emerged as an alternative to the PLO in the wake of the deal. But they follow the same strategy.

Hamas also looked to the support of other Middle Eastern regimes such as Iran as well as organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Years of siege in the Gaza Strip, and the crushing of the Brotherhood in Egypt's counter-revolution, followed. They pushed Hamas into deals with the Western-backed Egyptian regime.

The regime helps to enforce the siege of Gaza. But every time Hamas fights back, it also looks to Egypt to intervene and "mediate" on its behalf.

Despite what Israel claims, Hamas has also suggested it's prepared to make concessions in return for control of a Palestinian mini-state.

Palestinian demonstrators in Nablus throw rocks at Israeli troops during the first Intifada, January 1988

Uprisings across Middle East

THE MOST significant challenge Israel has ever faced didn't come from armed resistance groups such as Hamas or the PLO. It came when ordinary people rose up across Palestine—the First Intifada.

It was sparked in 1987 by a shocking act of brutality. Hundreds of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip were returning home from a day's work in Israel when they witnessed a gruesome killing.

An Israeli tank transporter drove at a line of workers' cars at a checkpoint—crushing four Palestinians to death and injuring another seven.

Funerals for three of the men that night in the nearby Jabalia refugee camp turned into a 10,000-strong demonstration that marched on the police station. The following day Israeli soldiers attacked another demonstration in Jabalia.

Israeli soldiers tried to crush every protest with lethal violence. But with each killing came more funerals and more demonstrations until the whole of Gaza—and then the whole of Palestine—was in revolt.

Protests and riots broke out right across the West Bank and inside Israel itself. Palestinian citizens of Israel joined a general strike in solidarity with people in the Occupied Territories.

Activists' committees rooted in every neighbourhood, town and village coordinated the rebellion. The most brutal repression by the Israeli state couldn't crush it.

For five years, Israel was bogged down in an uneven war it seemingly couldn't win. In January 1988 the Israeli newspaper the Jerusalem Post



Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shake on Oslo

wrote, "The streets in Gaza, the West Bank and in East Jerusalem are in effective control of the youth. It is a case of our 20 year olds battling their 20 year olds. Ours using armour, helicopters and guns, theirs, clubs, rocks and primitive Molotov cocktails."

Suppressed

Such images of Palestinians standing up to the might of Israel's military with little more than rocks and petrol bombs exposed the reality of the occupation. Support for the Palestinians grew—crucially across the Middle East.

Arab rulers declared support for the intifada. But they suppressed major solidarity demonstrations, fearing that they could turn into revolts of their own.

In Algeria, a mass movement against the government took inspiration from the intifada. Opposition leaders told protesters to "unite and take measures into your own hands like the Palestinians".

The solidarity movement in Egypt

can win

quickly turned its fire on its own government’s close relationship with Israel and the US.

Workers from the giant Mahalla textile mill in northern Egypt joined a demonstration early on in the uprising. Slogans against Israel turned into demands for Egypt to break ties with Israel and the US.

The biggest fear of the US-backed regimes in the Middle East was that the revolt could spill out of Palestine. This eventually pushed Israel into signing the 1993 peace deal with the PLO that aimed to curb the resistance.

Yet Israel and the Arab regimes remain terrified that Palestinian resistance could inspire wider revolts.

In other Arab countries supporters of Palestine can see how the struggle is linked to the fight against their own dictators. That’s why during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, people stormed the Israeli embassy in Cairo and forced the new regime to open its border with Gaza.

It’s why there have been the beginnings of solidarity protests again in Jordan, Morocco and Lebanon.

And it’s why the Arab regimes that recently signed deals with Israel are now demanding it halts its assault on the Palestinian resistance. Not because they care for Palestinians—but because they fear what their resistance could do.

Revolution in Egypt in 2011 spread terror among the dictatorships of the Middle East—and in ‘democratic’ Israel

HISTORY

Middle East’s ‘pillar of democracy’ was a racist endeavour from the start

ISRAEL IS often described as a pillar of democracy, maintaining peace in the Middle East. The truth is entirely different. Israel has been a brutal, racist, colonial state since its creation in Palestine.

Palestine had been fought over by competing powers before Israel was formed. It was captured by the Ottoman Empire in 1516 and was under Ottoman rule until Egypt took over in 1832.

Britain intervened eight years later to hand Palestine back to the Ottomans.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a political movement—Zionism—was becoming popular. It said that antisemitism could not be fully eradicated and therefore Jews needed to live in a separate state.

This was a despairing and wrong reaction to the vicious antisemitism pushed by rulers in many countries across Europe.

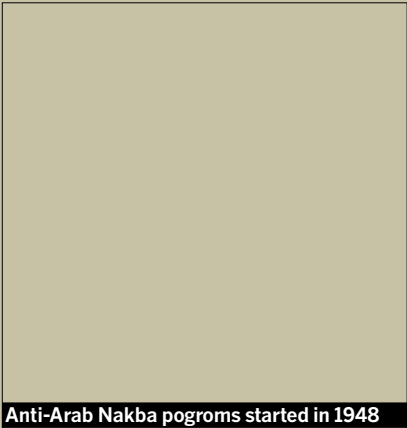
Zionist leaders sought to enlist the help of the most powerful world powers. In particular they hoped for the backing of the British Empire.

Liberal prime minister David Lloyd George supported Zionism when he became prime minister in 1916. A year later the Balfour Declaration solidified the support of Britain for the “creation of a national home for the Jewish people”.

Britain calculated that a Jewish state in the Middle East could become an outpost of pro-Western interests.

Following the First World War, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and Britain took control of Palestine.

Continued antisemitism, Nazi



Anti-Arab Nakba pogroms started in 1948

occupation and Holocaust in Europe forced many more Jewish people to flee. Zionism became much more popular.

Applied to Palestine, such a Jewish state inevitably meant the expulsion of the existing Palestinian population. It was from the start a racist endeavour.

Imperialism

In 1947 the United Nations (UN) approved a racist partition plan to divide Palestinian land into two states. Palestine was for the Arabs and Israel for Jews, while the city of Jerusalem would be classified as an international zone.

This plan was rightly opposed by Palestinians. Zionists were able to establish Israel due to the repression of Palestinians, with the backing of Western imperialism.

British rule ended in May 1948 and Israel declared independence. This sparked a coalition of neighbouring Arab nations to fight

against Israeli occupation and Western imperialism.

Israel occupied much more Palestinian land than was originally given to it by the UN.

Palestinians name this period the Nakba or “catastrophe”. Some 80 percent of Palestinian Arabs were expelled from their homes.

Historian Ilan Pappé said, “In a matter of seven months, five hundred and thirty one villages were destroyed and eleven urban neighbourhoods emptied.

“The mass expulsion was accompanied by massacres, rape and imprisonment of men.”

In 1967 Israel annexed more land in six days of war. Israel seized control of Gaza and the West Bank, including Jerusalem, as well as the Golan Heights in Syria and the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt.

The Israeli military’s success convinced the US that it would be a useful watchdog in the region. The aid and arms supplies began to flow in great quantities.

In 1993 “peace talks” in Oslo took place between the PLO and Israel. This resulted in the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PA) which sought to run parts of the West Bank and Gaza.

It was seen as a victory by some Palestinians. But it was another trap.

Pappé said, “The negative aspect of PLO participation was the fact that a unilateral Israeli policy of incremental annexation and partition of the occupied territories now received legitimacy from an agreement that the PLO leadership had signed.”

Palestine—A long history of resistance

FOLLOWING the annexation of land and Israeli independence, Palestinians were forced into neighbouring nations’ refugee camps. These camps are where a liberation movement was slowly formed.

In Kuwait, 1959 a small group founded the liberation organisation, Fatah. They became the dominant faction within the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)—the official representative body of Palestinians.

In 1987 an uprising or Intifada began in the occupied territories.

Stone-throwing and militant action was accompanied by mass

protests and strikes. People started organising education and healthcare themselves.

That revolt pushed Israel and the US towards the Oslo peace deal in 1993 as a way of containing the resistance.

People felt betrayed in the years after the 1993 Oslo Accords and sought an alternative resistance. Some joined the Islamic resistance movement, Hamas.

The second intifada was sparked in September 2000 as Israeli prime minister, Ariel Sharon visited Temple Mount in East Jerusalem.

Israel responded to protesters throwing stones



Hamas resistance fighters

with live ammunition, killing seven Palestinians. Several other protests across Gaza and the West Bank followed.

In the first five days, 47 Palestinians were killed, and 1,885 were wounded. The Israeli Defence Force (IDF) shot approximately 1.3 million bullets.

In retaliation, Hamas

launched a military offensive against the IDF using guerrilla-style tactics to bring war to the heart of Israel.

In 2006, Hamas was elected to govern Gaza and took authority from the PA following a Western-backed coup attempt.

Resistance and occupation continued. In 2018 the Great March of Return attracted tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians to march towards the Gaza border just to be met with extreme violence.

This resulted in 183 dead Palestinians and aid workers. 6,106 protesters were injured by Israeli snipers.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



The Socialist Workers Party is holding online meetings during the coronavirus crisis. This is to ensure that there can still be collective local discussion, organising and actions.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty for news of national online meetings and other updates.

ISRAELI COPS arrest a Palestinian protester in east Jerusalem

Sheikh Jarrah—why Israel is a racist state

BRISTOL
Thu 27 May, 7.30pm
688-397-748

CARDIFF
Wed 26 May, 7.30pm
630-181-4857

HOME COUNTIES
Thu 27 May, 6.30pm
872-4922-1957

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE
Thu 27 May, 7pm
992-204-9372

LONDON: SOUTH EAST
Thu 27 May, 7pm
529-913-6390

SHEFFIELD & SOUTH YORKSHIRE
Thu 27 May, 7pm
528-174-9278

PORTSMOUTH
Wed 26 May, 7.30pm
488-934-2809

BIRMINGHAM
Soundtrack to the struggle
Wed 26 May, 7pm
281-634-5938

BLACK COUNTRY, SHROPSHIRE AND STAFFORDSHIRE
Imperialism in the Middle East
Wed 26 May, 7.30pm
914-9548-1031

BOURNEMOUTH
Can capitalism ever be sustainable?
Wed 26 May, 7.30pm
868-2810-8409

BRADFORD
100 years since Partition—can there be a united Ireland?
Thu 27 May, 7pm
885-9187-7552

BRIGHTON & HOVE
Pamphlet launch—Capitalism and the Politics of Food
Thu 27 May, 6.30pm
841-2142-3683

BURNLEY & PENDLE
Why the Cop process failed to tackle climate change
Wed 26 May, 7.30pm
446-409-5118

CAMBRIDGE
After the Sewell report—how do we beat institutional racism?
Thu 27 May, 7.30pm
681-800-4408

CHESTERFIELD
Booklaunch—Breaking up the British state—Scotland, Independence and Socialism
Thu 27 May, 6.30pm
829-532-877

COVENTRY
Gimme shelter—how can we solve the housing crisis?
Wed 26 May, 7.30pm
823-945-1917

DEVON & CORNWALL
Will Biden increase imperialist tensions?
Thu 27 May, 7.30pm
865-2972-2883

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH
Imperialism and revolution—what was Frantz Fanon?
Wed 26 May, 7.30pm
894-2628-7708

EAST MIDLANDS
Pamphlet launch—Capitalism and the Politics of Food
Wed 26 May, 7pm
354-874-4790

EDINBURGH
Free speech, the Tories and defending our rights
Wed 26 May, 7.30pm
431-459-112

GLASGOW
Neoliberal collapse and the growth of the far right
Thu 27 May, 7pm
879 2402 3259

HUDDERSFIELD
What is Islamophobia and how do we fight it?
Wed 26 May, 6.30pm
290-168-1804

KENT
Is Labour right to wave the Union Jack?
Thu 27 May, 8.15pm
434-623-8064

LEEDS
One year after the murder of George Floyd—racism and resistance
Thu 27 May, 7pm
881-4770-0676

LIVERPOOL
Anger to revolution—what makes people rise up?
Wed 26 May, 7pm
493-925-5919

LONDON: HACKNEY
The environment and the myths of overpopulation
Thu 27 May, 7.30pm
854-8245-8715

LONDON: HARINGEY
One year after the murder of George Floyd—racism and resistance
Wed 26 May, 7.30pm
459-388-1576

LONDON: ISLINGTON
The Covid-19 crisis and how we fight for a new normal
Thu 27 May, 7pm
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Rare Beasts—a chaotic film with a confused message

Billie Piper wanted her first film to say something about sexism, parenthood and relationships—but what that something is isn't clear, says **Blythe Taylor**

IN BILLIE Piper's directorial debut *Rare Beasts*, Mandy lives at home in London with her mother and young son. The film opens abruptly with a date where Mandy finds herself sitting opposite ranting misogynist Pete.

Anti-love interest Pete introduces himself in the film as "hating women", stuck in his own heightened sense of self-worth as he battles to affirm his male identity.

It's never clear if we're supposed to sympathise with this man or condemn him yet he remains a central figure, much to the film's detriment.

Pitched as a black comedy and an alternative to the conventional rom-com, it rests itself on self-deprecating humour and blunt exchanges of dialogue.

The film has its interesting moments with some surreal offshoots from the main narrative. It is heavily stylised with saturated colours and bold transitions.

Whimsical

In one whimsical and tragic scene we're plunged into a dimly lit stage set featuring a bedroom as the auditorium.

It's an anxiety inducing scene. Younger versions of Mandy tap dance to attract the attention of her parents in the audience as they squabble bitterly with each other.

By this point we already know of their deteriorated relationship.

Mandy's character spends most of the film being a stressed single mother. It feels like she is destined to take her mother's role, living a life of resentment and chain smoking.

It feels like both characters have more to say—yet it's never said. Neither of their stories hit the right



BILLIE PIPER as Mandy

tone and often fall back on centring on the men in their lives, who are often a parody of fragile masculinity.

The film's erratic and hasty approach to storytelling quickly becomes confusing as we're pushed from one situation to another.

This does reflect the chaos of Pete and Mandy's volatile relationship, all the while accompanied by Mandy's son, who struggles with his own behaviour. Piper looks to take on

issues around single motherhood, everyday sexism and religion. Yet these themes linger on the surface with no depth.

Caricatures of screaming women replace any room for nuance and it's difficult to understand what message the film is trying to pinpoint.

There is a brief glimpse of what the story might be getting at when Mandy exclaims that all she wants is a five-hour day and a stew that keeps.

The world in *Rare Beasts* is conflicting and abrasive.

It goes some way to describing the social alienation of navigating a society in which expectations of love and family are thrust upon us.

But rather than breaking down these social relations or providing some element of consolation, the film feels like a concession to what it claims to challenge.

Rare Beasts is in cinemas from 21 May

Vision of a dreadful future after climate catastrophe

NOVEL

THE HIGH HOUSE

By Jessie Greengrass, out now

IN THE High House, large scale climate catastrophe has already devastated Britain. And now it's up to Caro, Pauly and Sal to try to survive.

Among the climate chaos, the trio are just about subsisting in a countryside house.

They're able to do that because ahead of the crisis Francesca, Pauly's mother, stocked their refuge full of

enough supplies to be self-sufficient.

Those who survive have done so through a mixture of wealth and luck.

It's not explicitly said how long they've been languishing in the High House, but it's probably decades, certainly long enough to forget what bread tastes like.

In the High House, much like in our world today, the warnings about climate collapse are steady but unmistakable.

There are seasons that don't end, fires that rip through forests far away

and people desperately queueing for water supplies.

Reading it, it's hard for your stomach not to completely drop.

These aren't fantastical scenes just pulled out from author Jessie Greengrass's head—they are ripped from recent history.

And its here when character Sal

seem angriest—lamenting that climate crisis didn't appear important enough because the catastrophe seemed so far away.

Although we see little of Francesca directly, it's her love for Pauly that provides some of the most touching aspects of the book.

She packed years of age appropriate Christmas and birthday presents, toys, classic children's books and shoes in

every size. But the High House isn't some great ark, propelling Caro, Pauly and Sal to safety. You get the very strong sense it's slowly becoming a tomb.

Despite the bleak subject matter, *The High House* is an engaging read, although there were probably a few too lengthy metaphors about birds.

It takes courage to write about climate catastrophe as it's likely to unfold—steadily but also suddenly, and with a huge loss of life, in every sense of the word.

Sarah Bates



DOCUMENTARY

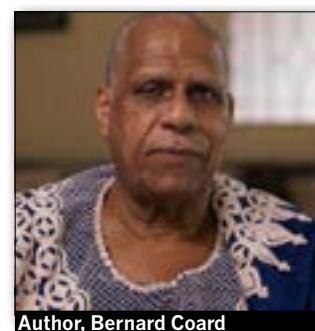
SUBNORMAL: A BRITISH SCANDAL

BBC1, 9pm Thu 21 May and then on BBC iPlayer

SUBNORMAL examines how black children in the 1960s and 1970s were disproportionately sent to schools for the so-called "educationally subnormal".

They were labelled as stupid, difficult and disruptive.

Examining one of the biggest scandals in the history of British education, *Subnormal* tells the story of how black parents,



Author, Bernard Coard

teachers and activists banded together to expose the injustice and force the education system to change.

Celebrity psychologists Hans Eysenck and Arthur Jensen were propounding theories that black people were genetically less intelligent than white people. These theories infiltrated teacher training and found their way into schools. IQ tests were based on these theories, with the odds stacked against children from the West Indies.

Subnormal explores how these racist arguments led to the scandal and the devastating impact it had on children.

What's on at Bookmarks

The socialist bookshop

Breaking up the British State

Scotland, independence and socialism



Online booklaunch

6:30pm, Friday 4 June

Watch at bit.ly/BreakBritishState

THERE IS an attempt, even by some on the left, to make out that working class people have fundamentally changed.

There's a further claim that reactionary ideas such as racism are inescapably ingrained in many working class people.

But what is it that really makes someone working class? Some on the right of the Labour Party think they have the answer.

Deborah Mattinson, newly appointed as Keir Starmer's director of strategy, wrote in her recent book *Beyond the Red Wall* that patriotism and nationality are the key things the working class care about.

She claims that these things, along with the prioritising of crime and immigration, could allow Labour to "reconnect with the voters it has lost".

Mattinson also puts a divide between young workers in metropolitan areas who attended university, and those "left behind" in northern towns.

But her strategy is based on a basic misunderstanding of what the working class is.

Mattinson assumes the working class is made up of a singular, narrow demographic. In reality the working class hold many different—often contradictory—ideas.

But class cannot be limited to a set of views. Class is essentially objective, rooted in your position within a capitalist society based on a relationship to the labour process.

A young graduate working in a call centre in London is no less working class than a factory worker in the north of England if both are exploited.

Karl Marx wrote in the *Holy Family*, "It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment regards as its aim.

"It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do."

So class cannot be defined by a set of characteristics—where you live, what you look or sound like or your interests and beliefs.

KARL Marx explained that class society is made up of the ruling class and the working class. The ruling class is the minority at the top that owns the means of production—factories, equipment, machines, buildings.

The working class is the majority at the bottom who have to sell their labour power to the ruling class in exchange for a wage.

Since Marx's day a new layer—the middle class—has

further developed and sits in-between.

The middle classes assist in the exploitation of workers through disciplinary actions and make decisions over things such as shifts.

They have more control over their own labour and generally earn more.

But like the working class, what makes a middle class person is tied to their part in the labour process not whether they shop at Waitrose. Capitalism is a



Working class people have a shared interest in overthrowing the system

IT ISN'T true that working class people are all lost to racist ideas—as was shown in the Black Lives Matter protests

WHO IS WORKING CLASS?

A debate is raging about the attributes that make us working class to try and understand why some are losing faith in the Labour Party. Isabel Ringrose explores what really defines class.

Deborah Mattinson

have a shared interest in overthrowing the system and bosses.

They are brought together in the workplace by their shared exploitation, and can unite to beat the constant drive for profit and competition that bosses are so reliant on.

This is what Marx meant by workers being the "gravediggers of capitalism".

How much you earn in comparison to another worker doesn't qualify you for being working class or not.

Where you stand in comparison to members of other classes does.

A person working in a warehouse in London may earn more than a shop worker in Durham. But both of their managers and bosses earn more and assist in exploiting them both for profit.

CLASS IS often reduced to subjective features—such as education or wealth—or even the reactionary views that some parts of the working class have.

But these issues are only signifiers of class—not definitions of them. Class affects all aspects of life from health, diet, lifestyle and housing. But these aspects are not what defines what class actually is.

Some working people may have less time and money to put together organic, freshly made meals. But some might do.

Shopping in Waitrose doesn't mean that you are middle class. If a worker was to shop in Waitrose they wouldn't switch classes at the checkout.

Likewise someone that attended a comprehensive school or was brought up in a small, rented house could still become a boss.

Some ruling class people don't wear designer clothes, but this doesn't mean they have the same class interests as workers.

Plenty of working class people go to university and plenty from the top don't.

Working class people may struggle more to fund life at university, and similarly find it harder to find a job afterwards if they're not in the "right" circles.

Of course it is often easier to identify what class someone is by their material circumstances.

If you attend Eton—the training ground for the ruling elite—you're probably not working class.

The elitism that is ingrained within such institutions is seen in the extortionate costs that many working people simply cannot afford.

Similarly, if you own luxury items such as a yacht it is usually a sign that you were able to amass bumper profits from exploiting workers.

But these are still only symptoms of your standing in society rather than what fundamentally determines it. As Marx explained, it doesn't matter

system that runs on profit. This profit is created by exploitation of workers, whether every worker accepts it's happening or not. Workers are not paid the full value of their labour, so the excess or "surplus value" they create mostly becomes the bosses' profit.

As much as this exploits workers, it also gives them enormous power. If every worker refused to work then the system would grind to a halt.

So working class people

what the proletariat thinks or does—the economic relations in society are fixed.

Despite exploitation and the material reality the working class find themselves in, many do not automatically see themselves as part of the proletariat.

The lack of struggle in recent years has led to a rise in some backwards ideas and damaged the confidence and consciousness of the working class.

And there is nothing automatic about working class people suddenly waking up with a revolutionary outlook on society, which is why agitation and resistance are crucial.

But despite what the Labour right say backwards ideas are not ingrained into the minds of working class people.

Workers are actually divided by repressive and bigoted ideas that are pushed down from the top of society.

What many Marxists have described as contradictory consciousness means working people can hold backwards, bigoted views about fellow workers. At the same time they can hold progressive ones about the need for change.

Some working class people might feel a sense of patriotism to Queen and country. But these ideas aren't rigid. During struggle workers often begin to realise that they have little in common with their rulers.

THROUGH THE process of revolution, Marx explained that workers become a “class in itself” to a “class for itself”.

He meant a process where people moved from objectively being a class to having self-awareness of their unity, collectivity and power.

They would grasp the ability to bring about a new, socialist society and, through struggle, to rid themselves of “the muck of ages”.

The reality of exploitation pushes workers to resist collectively—and means struggle is built into the system.

But struggle isn't a magic wand that fixes all the contradictions and produces a class ready to battle its exploiters. Ideas have to be challenged in the here and now.

That's why every fight matters. And as crucial as class is, oppression—racism, sexism, homophobia, etc—has to be battled and fought. We stand

Celebrating the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle (top) University workers on strike in 2019 (above)

with the oppressed when they are under attack, regardless of their class background.

But it is true that as Marxists, we see class as vital to ending the system that creates oppression in the first place.

To that end, we fight against prejudice and chauvinism among workers in part because there can be no socialist future while we are divided.

In struggle workers can gain consciousness and confidence. Only a majority of workers coming out against the system has the power to topple the system.

Workers are the only ones with the ability to overthrow capitalism and eliminate the basis for oppression because they can conquer only by organising collectively.

So seeing the working class as a set of people with certain fixed and backward ideas or traits undermines the potential of the working class.

It means to label the working class as just another identity—rather than the ultimate force for change.



FOCUS ON HEALTH

Rulers failed to prepare for ‘preventable’ Covid-19

Sadie Robinson examines a new report exposing how world leaders' response to coronavirus warnings led to the current crisis

WORLD LEADERS were warned that the emergence of a virus such as Covid-19 was “highly likely” for more than a decade. But they refused to prepare for it.

Their failures turned Covid-19 into a global pandemic that killed millions. A new report commissioned by the World Health Organisation (WHO) shows this was “preventable”.

“Experts have been warning of the threat of new pandemic diseases and urged major changes in the way we protect against them,” the report said. “But the change needed has not come about.”

In 2003 a Sars epidemic killed 774 people in six months. Sars was a novel coronavirus, but it was easier to contain because people didn't transmit the disease until after showing symptoms.

“It was understood that if a new fast-moving pathogen were transmissible in the absence of symptoms, it would pose a much deadlier challenge,” the panel said.

Other outbreaks followed, including the H1N1 influenza pandemic, Ebola and Middle East respiratory syndrome.

The panel said that since 2009, “At least 11 high-level panels and commissions have made specific recommendations in 16 reports to improve global pandemic preparedness. The majority were never implemented.”

Preparing for pandemics was “vastly underfunded”. For most countries, “wait and see” seemed a less costly and less consequential choice than concerted public health action”.

Health workers warned about Covid-19.

But it took officials in China until late December 2019 to publicly warn about what seemed to be unusual pneumonia cases linked to the Huanan Seafood Market.

And this wasn't until

CORONAVIRUS HAS resulted in over 3.34 million deaths

information regarding the virus was leaked by doctors following a cover up.

On 5 January, the WHO alerted all governments. It declared Covid-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January.

At that point, the WHO said it was “still possible to interrupt virus spread”.

But this would require countries to “put in place strong measures to detect disease early, isolate and treat cases, trace contacts and promote social distancing”.

Outside

By then there were 98 cases in 18 countries outside China. But many countries didn't act until March.

On 11 March there were 118,000 cases in 114 countries. “It is glaringly obvious that February 2020 was a lost month,” said the panel.

Countries that strictly implemented contact tracing programmes fast were “highly successful” in limiting transmission.

The worst-hit countries “devalued the science, denied the potential impact of the pandemic, delayed comprehensive action and allowed distrust to

undermine efforts”. Many countries' health systems were “beset by long-standing problems of fragmentation, undervaluing of health workers and underfunding”.

The report said Covid-19 “has been a pandemic of inequalities”.

“Those who had least before the pandemic have even less now,” it added.

Workers with fewer rights “have had little or no support”. Migrants and refugees have been “shut out of testing services and health facilities”.

“A lack of social protection prevented vulnerable and sick people from staying at home because of the risk of a loss of income.”

Several richer countries, including Britain, have enough vaccine doses to cover 200 percent of their populations.

Covax, the programme to supply vaccines to poorer countries, expects to have only covered 27 percent of their populations by the end of this year.

“Current institutions, public and private, failed to protect people from a devastating pandemic,” said the panel. “Without change, they will not prevent a future one.”

It argued for “system-level change”. And it said challenging inequality is “the only way to manage a global pandemic”.

“The shelves of storage rooms in the United Nations and Member State capitals are full of the reports of previous reviews and evaluations that could have mitigated the crisis in which we find ourselves,” it said.

“They have sat ignored. This time, it must be different.”

Read the report at bit.ly/WHOCovid19Report

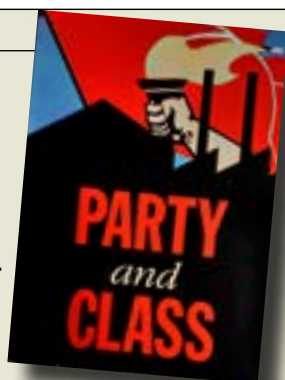
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Cities have no plans to deal with climate crisis

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

SCORCHING temperatures, rising sea levels, flooding and droughts are facing over half of the world's population that live in cities.

But many cities don't have plans in place to protect populations from climate devastation, says a new report.

The report's authors, the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), found 43 percent of the 819 cities they collected data from had no adaptation plans to keep people and critical infrastructure safe.

This is despite 93 percent of city authorities disclosing to the CDP that they knew they were at risk from climate change.

A quarter of these cities said that "budgetary restraints" were stopping better plans from being made.

Weather

Extreme weather events will leave cities' populations dangerously at risk.

Only 110 cities have been implementing crisis management systems. And just 143 cities are



AN INTERNATIONAL environmental movement has demanded radical change to address catastrophic climate change

PICTURE: JEANNE MENJOLET

implementing flood mapping. Failure to implement defences and plans will mean the population of cities will suffer.

We have already seen the "unprecedented" floods in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2020.

These floods displaced thousands and killed more than 60 people.

The city had not built

adequate adaptations to deal with persistent flooding and had prioritised development by private firms over people.

It is also clear many cities are failing to make substantial steps towards a transition to renewable energy sources.

Only 23 percent of cities have a renewable energy target. A tiny 9 percent report their target is to have

70 percent of their energy produced from renewable sources.

Although a worrying number of cities are falling dangerously short, the report said there has been some improvement in recent years.

It found that 87 percent of cities are making sustainability master plans and also notes that over

1,000 cities have declared a climate emergency.

The move by cities to put forward climate plans, even marginally, can in part be attributed to the movement on the streets led by the youth strikes and Extinction Rebellion.

But as the report makes clear, more must be done.

Global warming is already making vast sections of rural land uninhabitable due to persistent flooding, harsh weather and crop failure.

This is forcing millions to migrate to towns and cities.

Urbanisation

Rapid urbanisation is likely to result in rising levels of poverty. A 2017 UN report predicted that 40 percent of urban expansion may be into slums.

The poorest will be disproportionately hit from the impact of the climate crisis.

The report noted the elderly and the poorest are the two groups who are the most vulnerable to climate change in cities.

It said people with low income are at immediate risk

of climate threats in 286 cities across the globe.

There is also a revealing section that found public health is one of the aspects of city infrastructure that is most at risk from climate change.

This could have devastating consequences as pandemics such as Covid-19 are likely to become more frequent and deadly.

The report calls on world leaders to pledge at COP26 in November to increase budgets for cities to spend on climate plans.

While more effective adaptations in cities to defend against climate destruction should be fought for, it is important to push for more than this report suggests.

Adaptation will never be the answer.

Accelerating climate change will breach any defences.

We must tackle the roots of the climate crisis.

To safeguard our continued existence on this planet, we must wrestle control of society out of the hands of those who exploit the planet, and fight to put people before profit.

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A crisis of Labourism

AFTER THE elections earlier this month, the possibility of a Labour government is looking less likely.

As Labour's decline continues, socialists must be part of the discussion.

I think the party's decline can be traced back to the Great Miners' Strike of 1984-5. Neil Kinnock emerged from the left to become party leader but soon moved to the right.

Two of his decisions really highlight this.

First, the attacks on miners' leader Arthur Scargill and the NUM union. In this he was aided by the failure of other trade union leaders to properly support the miners.

Second, the attack on the Militant Tendency, which ultimately was expelled from the party.

The defeat of the miners helped Tory Margaret Thatcher enormously and led to further defeats for dock workers and printers.

Finally, in 1997, we got rid of the Thatcher and John Major Tory governments.

But Labour's Tony Blair and Gordon Brown dashed our hopes by continuing many of the Tories' policies—especially the Private Finance Initiative.

They used this to build hospitals but saddled us with a huge debt overhang.

The failure of Labour then and now raises important questions for us.

If the Labour Party isn't up to job, what kind of political organisation is required to begin the process of renewal and fightback to permanent political change?

Eddie Prevost
Harlow, Essex



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Rise in Green vote cannot hide party's contradictions

WHAT SHOULD we make of the rise of the Green Party in the recent elections?

In Bristol, the party became the joint biggest on the council with a whopping 24 seats after taking 12 from Labour.

Among their new intake was a former school climate striker and others who've been involved in Extinction Rebellion campaigns.

Labour was punished by such activists for abandoning the left and radical environmental politics, and ditching Jeremy Corbyn.

When fighting Labour opponents the Greens play up their radical credentials. They highlight policies that will benefit poor and working class people so when Labour shifts to the right they will pick up the progressive vote.

But the party also competes with

the Lib Dems and Tories for seats. So in more affluent areas its push is centred on simplified arguments for preservation of the countryside and "green spaces"—and building "green" businesses.

So the Greens on the one hand tell people that we need radical systemic change. But on the other hand reassure those with a vested interest in keeping the existing order that they won't be threatened.

That logic has seen the Greens do deals with parties that are far to the right of it.

I also worry that the Greens can lure people away from campaigning on the streets and instead blunt their activism and energy through too much focus on the ballot box and the council chamber.

If we are serious about issues including racism, environmental

destruction, defending refugees and Palestinian rights then mobilising in the streets is key.

As we've just witnessed in Glasgow, it is there that people experience a taste of their own individual and collective power—and learn not to trust the authorities.

A focus on elections can pose a real danger to radicals if it moves activists away from campaigns involving thousands to those that assume we need only be represented by an enlightened handful.

I, like most socialists, will be working alongside people in the Greens, and those who've voted Green. But I'll argue that to win the struggles for social and environmental justice, we need more radicalism than they can offer.

Ian Rappel
Talgarth, Powys

Just a thought...

Scandal of fire and rehire

OUR PROBLEM on fire and rehire (Socialist Worker, 12 May) is our Tory government wants companies to fire and rehire.

They don't care that a majority of people are against it. That will all be forgotten by the next election, they believe.

A round of fire and rehire every couple of years will really keep redundancy awards down.

Linda Evans
On Facebook

Our dashed Labour hope

SURELY ANYONE who thinks that democratic socialism is the best way forward must by now have realised that the Labour Party is not the vehicle for that?

The current, small group of left wing MPs in the Labour Party, with one or two exceptions, is keeping quiet and presumably will do so indefinitely.

John Lincoln
On Facebook

How many really died?

YOU ARE right to point out that the pandemic continues, despite the media attempt to "move on" (Socialist Worker, 12 May).

Research that compares recorded deaths to excess deaths this week suggested that up to 13 million people across the world may have died.

The Indian government in particular is allowing the systematic under-reporting of Covid-19 deaths.

Jason Edgar
Brighton

What choice for Myanmar?

YOUR REPORTING of the uprising in Myanmar has been useful in charting the resistance.

But do I notice a tone of regret in your reports about the recent turn towards armed resistance and assassinations?

Faced with the hyper aggressive police and army, surely logic compels that democracy fighters respond in kind?

In battle there must be symmetry. Isn't that something Lenin learned?

Santoshi Lahiri
West Bengal, India

This is an opportunity

READERS HAVE probably seen interviews with restaurant and hotel managers complaining about the lack of staff in the wake of lockdown.

Labour shortages in the industry could have big effects.

It is estimated that around 700,000 workers from the European Union have left London in recent months.

Many of those worked in the service sector, including as highly skilled workers, such as chefs.

During the pandemic thousands of colleagues lost their jobs and around two million employees

were kept on furlough.

Now businesses are opening up again, employers are finding that many furloughed employees don't want to come back to work.

Who wants to return to low pay, long hours and poor treatment?

That's why this is good time to get organised in trade unions.

We should demand better pay and working conditions in an industry for too long rife with high staff turnover, unpaid hours, zero hour contracts, and abuse.

Rafel Sanchis
East London

Was Craig Murray singled out for jail?

CRAIG MURRAY, the former British ambassador to Uzbekistan and campaigner for Scottish independence, has been found guilty of contempt of court and has been sentenced to eight months in prison.

In his blog, Murray commented on a court case involving sexual misconduct allegations brought against Alex Salmond.

Salmond was found not guilty of all charges, although he admitted to "inappropriate behaviour".

However, while not naming the women who brought allegations against Salmond, the court decided that Craig Murray's blog



Craig Murray PICTURE: VODEX

contained enough information to allow a "jigsaw identification" of the complainants.

In the wake of this trial, supporters of Salmond left the Scottish National Party, and some joined his new Alba party.

From the start Alba was tainted with homophobia and transphobia. Despite this, thousands joined.

The sentence is seen as harsh for a number of reasons. Murray's age and health, the fact that he has a young family and he has waited months for sentencing. Also, others had revealed the names of the women involved and have not been charged.

The welfare of the women at the centre of this case has been ignored. Many will now have no confidence in the systems in place to deal with sexual harassment.

Charlotte Ahmed
Glasgow

Woolwich ferry strike supports victimised union rep

by SAMORD

FERRY WORKERS in Woolwich, east London, walked out on strike last Friday in solidarity with their union representative who is being victimised by management.

"They only come for the reps so they can start attacking the workers," the Unite union's regional officer Onay Kasab told pickets.

Bosses claim union rep Mark didn't correctly deal with an onboard oil spill. He was subsequently demoted from his role as captain and given a warning, following a disciplinary hearing.

Mark and his colleagues deny the bosses' accusations.

Mark told Socialist Worker, "When we raise complaints about safety or whatever, it turns to finger pointing and victimisation.

"Bosses want negotiations now but a while ago they completely refused to speak to the union."

"The staff and union aren't listened to or taken into account."

Alongside the issue of victimisation, workers are also angry at the failure to finalise a new pay and reward scheme.

And they are against the use of agency staff and the failure to provide adequate health and safety training.

"People are pissed off, health and safety has gone down the drain," Mark added.

Untrained

"Management hasn't learnt from the death of a young lad a few years ago who fell from the ferry.

"We've lost experienced staff and they're replaced with untrained or agency workers."

The dispute involves 57 workers—and 97 percent of them voted to strike. The majority of workers joined the picket line and stopped the ferry's operation.

Transport for London (TfL) took over the ferry's operations from Briggs Marine Contractors Ltd because of a pattern of poor employee relations.

BACK STORY

Workers at the Woolwich Ferry in London are striking over victimisation of a Unite union rep

● The 57 strikers voted 97 percent in favour of strikes

● They are also angry at the failure to award new pay schemes and take health and safety seriously

● The first of eight days of strikes saw the ferry disrupted, and a further seven days are planned

Despite the new operators, problems haven't been resolved.

Further strike dates have been called for 24 and 28 May and 1, 4, 7, 11 and 21 June with plans to announce more if the issues aren't resolved.

The ferry is a vital Thames crossing that connects the boroughs of Newham and Greenwich.

Passengers

Before the pandemic, an estimated 2.6 million passengers used the ferry annually.

Kasab said, "It is a sad indictment of the TfL bosses that they seem to be following the same course as Briggs Marine Contractors which meted out some appalling employment practices to the workforce in the recent past.

"Our members have returned an overwhelming mandate for strike action at the Woolwich Ferry in support of their victimised shop steward and over a myriad of other employment issues.

"The strikes will cause disruption, with commuters returning to their workplaces in the capital following the easing of lockdown."

Following the hardships of the pandemic, the workers are determined to win and to escalate action if necessary.



On other pages...

Scandal of government housing agency boss >>Page 2



STRIKES AT the Woolwich Ferry disrupted sailings across the Thames in east London

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Health workers across Scotland must keep up battle to win decent pay rise

SCOTTISH HEALTH workers will have to battle hard to keep a pay fight going after Unison voted heavily to accept the 4 percent offer. It was recommended by leaders of Unison, the biggest health union.

Much more positively, 69 percent of members of the nurses' RCN union voted to reject the Scottish government's offer.

The GMB union, which has a significant base in the Scottish ambulance service, also rejected the deal.

Geoff Earl, a member of the Scottish RCN council, told an online meeting of activists last week that he was "extremely proud" of nurses that rejected the government offer.

He reminded the audience that his union had fought alone over pay and safe staffing in Northern Ireland in 2019—and that it was prepared to do so again.

"Don't listen to the naysayers," he insisted, referring to those arguing Unison's acceptance has ended the pay battle. "This fight has got a long, long way to go yet."

The RCN says it will now await a response from the Scottish government before deciding how to



Northern Ireland nurses on strike in 2019

proceed. But the union is making it clear that a strike over pay in Scotland is a strong possibility.

Gary Smith of the GMB union agreed, adding his union's position was being "driven from below".

Parliament

He said that he'd be recommending the union moves to a ballot for industrial action. And that he wants a march of thousands of health workers to besiege the Scottish parliament over the issue.

"We are sick to death of getting crumbs," he said.

Smith was backed by GMB rep Holly Turner. She talked about how in 15 years working in the NHS conditions have never been tougher.

Pay cuts, she said, were directly affecting patient care because low pay led to understaffing and a dangerous work environment.

"We refuse to let this continue," she said.

Unison's leaders further undermined the NHS pay fight across Britain by saying that 4 percent is a good deal.

Scottish Unison's head of health Willie Duffy said, "This pay rise represents a fair increase for our members."

In truth, 4 percent is far short of what health workers need after years of real pay cuts and worsening conditions.

It is clear that in Scotland much now depends on how the RCN responds. If, as many leading activists say, the union is serious about industrial action, it could lead to a wave of strikes across hospitals.

In turn many nurses in other unions could seek to join the action by switching unions.

RCN hospital picket lines could cause a crisis for the big unions if their members refuse to cross them.

Health workers in all unions must keep up the pressure on pay.

Yuri Prasad

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Workers are hitting back in three councils

STRIKES BY around 170 environmental workers in Norwich are set for next week.

They workers were transferred from Norse—owned by Norfolk County Council—to NCSL, which is a new company set up by Norwich City Council.

Another 230 workers are to be transferred later.

During talks lasting two years the workforce was promised harmonisation with existing city council workers.

Now they are being offered a derisory 20p an hour more, which does little more than track the revised Real Living Wage from 1 April.

Unite union members voted 83 percent for strikes on a 90 percent turnout.

Unison members recorded a similarly strong vote.

The first strikes will be 26 May to 2 June.

The People Before Profit group has been on the streets leafleting for support and collecting donations.

The workers have called a solidarity march on Monday 24 May, assembling outside St Andrew's Hall in Norwich at 1.30pm. The march will commence at 2.30pm.



NORWICH WORKERS are ready

PICTURE: JAMES RODIE, UNISON

●Messages of support to adam.oakes@unitetheunion.org and jonathan.dunning@unisonnorfolkcounty.co.uk
Peter Waters

THURROCK—Thurrock council workers in Essex are continuing their battle to defend pay.

Workers in the waste and recycling department have been striking since 13 April.

Last Thursday the Unite union told the council the

strike will continue until 18 June.

The proposed cuts will see front line workers lose between £1,200 and £3,800 a year.

Unite regional officer Michelle Cook said, "It's an absolute disgrace that Thurrock Council is trying to slash thousands of pounds from essential workers' pay in the middle of a health crisis."

"Thurrock Council can end this strike if it chooses. Instead

it's spending thousands of pounds on external contractors while rubbish piles up."

●Donations to the strike fund to sort code 60-83-01, account 20216557, name: Unite 1/1152. Messages of solidarity to willie.howard@unitetheunion.org

EALING—Ealing Civil Enforcement Officers in west London are into a second week of nine days of planned strikes.

Unite union regional officer Clare Keogh said, "Serco has attempted to undermine collective bargaining through the targeting of individual staff and the misuse of the absence policy."

Workers voted 97 percent for strikes. A Unite rep said, "Serco are trying to use the sickness policy to sack people. It's cheaper and easier for them. We want a review of the sickness policy."

"Management tried to weaken the union by bribing some of us to leave, but we are sticking together—striking together."

"We want the council to take the service back in house so Serco's profits can be put back into the community."

Graham Hodgkin

JACOBS DOUWE EGBERTS



Protesting last Saturday

PICTURE: CONOR KENNELLY

Grinding the coffee bosses

OVER 200 workers, their families and supporters turned out in a very impressive show of solidarity with the strike at the Jacobs Douwe Egberts (JDE) coffee plant in Banbury, Oxfordshire, last Saturday.

The level of local support was demonstrated by the large numbers of passing motorists who hooted their horns in solidarity.

Workers in the Unite union expressed a determination to continue with the strike until management withdraws fire and rehire proposals.

These threaten cuts of up to thousands of pounds a year for some.

Ted, who has worked in the company for over 20 years, warned that the company's treatment of workers such as him, would ultimately backfire on them.

Other strikers pointed to what they said was the particularly bullying nature of the management.

As an example they said bosses had threatened to sack workers who refused to work overtime over Easter.

The strike continues with workers escalating their action to a three day work stoppage from next week.

●Messages of support to gray@unitetheunion.org
Conor Kennelly

RAIL WORKERS

Determined at Abellio

STRIKES BY RMT union members continued at Abellio ScotRail last Sunday.

The union says bosses "continue to treat front line staff with contempt".

The action by conductors and examiners is over equality and justice in respect of enhanced payments for rest day working.

The RMT revealed last week that Abellio is using volunteer managers as scab labour to act as a second person on trains.

The union says some do not have the knowledge, experience and safety competencies required. RMT general secretary Mick Lynch

said, "Our action remains absolutely solid again today and I want to pay tribute to our members who refuse to be ground down and bullied by Abellio."

"It is frankly appalling that rather than sitting down with the union to negotiate a fair settlement to this dispute Abellio is playing fast and loose with public safety."

"I am also calling again for the political leadership and Transport Scotland to end their vow of silence and start taking responsibility by calling Abellio ScotRail to account."

Further strikes are set for every Sunday

SCHOOLS

Islington, Nottingham fight

TEACHERS AT Islington Sixth Form College kicked off escalating strike action on Wednesday of last week with a one-day strike and a big, confident and lively picket.

NEU union members are fighting a management which is seeking to impose increased workloads.

This includes 13 evenings of interviewing prospective students as well as an unacceptable regime of observations. Management has so far refused to negotiate seriously over these changes. They told staff that they, not the union, run the college and if staff want a say they should apply for promotion.

They even threatened not to pay teachers a recommended pay award if they went on strike.

Maybe senior managers who witnessed the unity and determination last week will

now have second thoughts.

If they don't further, and escalating, strikes are coming.

●Messages of support to neu@islingtonteachers.org
Ken Muller

■NEU UNION members at Nottingham Academy struck last week.

Workers claim that a rushed restructure will be disruptive to students who have already missed out on a large proportion of their education.

Around 30 people joined the picket line waving flags and holding banners reading, "Put teachers first, so they can put their students first." The restructure has forced some teachers to reapply for their own jobs.

More strikes were planned for Tuesday and Thursday this week.

●Tweet solidarity messages to @NEUEastMidlands

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

Resistance in jobcentres

THE DEPARTMENT for Work and Pensions (DWP) was set to begin its attempts to impose a mass return to work in Jobcentres from Monday of this week.

Reopening jobcentres would pave the way for the return of the sanctions regime that punishes people for missing or being late for appointments.

It means claimants—including disabled people who may not feel safe at face to face appointments—could be punished with fines.

The jobcentre workers' PCS union also says its unsafe and could put staff at risk. There are reports that work coaches have been told to carry out up to nine face to face interviews each day.

A consultative ballot of PCS members in jobcentres, asking if they would be prepared to strike against reopening, was set to end on Friday of this week.

UNIVERSITIES

Liverpool has strikes plan

OVER 1,000 workers at the university of Liverpool are preparing to strike for three weeks from next Monday.

The members of the UCU union will be on strike from 24 to 28 May, 1 to 4 June and 7 to 11 June.

The strikes were called after the university threatened to make 47 staff in the faculty of health and life sciences redundant. Already threats of strikes have forced the university to cut down this number by 15.

●Messages of support to laut@liverpool.ac.uk and donate to the strike fund at bit.ly/ForLivUCU

■WORKERS AT the University of Kent have voted to strike over compulsory redundancies that could equate to 40 members of academic staff losing their jobs.

UCU members voted 78 percent in favour of strikes.

ROUND-UP

■WORKERS AT glass manufacturing firm Encirc in Elton, Cheshire, are renewing industrial action after rejecting an offer from the company.

More than 170 workers had been taking action over working patterns and contracts that are less favourable than other departments in the company. A 48-hour strike by Unite union members took place last Thursday and others were set for Wednesday this week and next Wednesday.

■UNIONS representing 750,000 council and school support staff in England and Wales have criticised the 1.5 percent pay offer made by the Local Government Association.

The GMB, Unite and Unison unions submitted a joint pay claim to the local government employers in February for a 10 percent pay rise.

It will take action to win.

■BIOMEDICAL scientists who do Covid-19 testing at a Lancashire NHS trust are ramping up their industrial action. They have announced a further three weeks of strikes in June, after bosses reneged on an upgrading pay agreement.

The Unite union said its 21 members, who work at the Royal Blackburn Hospital and the Burnley General Teaching Hospital, will strike continuously from Monday 31 May until Monday 21 June.

GLASGOW VICTORY SHOWS WE CAN STOP RACIST RAIDS

by CHARLIE KIMBER

A TREMENDOUS victory in Glasgow against an attempted deportation should encourage similar action by activists across Britain.

Ordinary people in the city mobilised to block an immigration raid in the Pollokshields area of the city.

After a seven-hour protest by around 500 people, it ended in complete victory, with two migrants from India released. A victory march to the local mosque celebrated the success and made sure the men were given sanctuary.

The police had been unable to clear the crowd and had to back off.

Lakhvir Singh, one of the men released, told ITV News, “Thank you very, very much to all those who supported us. I was taken unannounced, they barged in and put me in a van.”

“I am so happy my fate brought me here where people are so connected that they will come onto the streets to support one of their own.”

Both those who were facing deportation have lived in Britain for ten years, but still do not have official leave to remain. At around 10am last



PROTESTERS IN Glasgow surrounded the immigration van

PICTURE: HECTOR SIERRA

Thursday an immigration enforcement team arrived in Kenmore Street.

Two men were removed from a house and placed in the van.

But activists, aware that Home Office “dawn raids”

have been restarted recently, had set up a network to stand in solidarity with anyone targeted.

Seeing what was happening, dozens of people quickly surrounded the van, and one person lay on the

ground under it. Police then appeared in large numbers. But more and more people also came onto the streets to stop the raid.

They chanted, “These are our neighbours” and “Let them go”. Glasgow socialist

and Stand Up To Racism supporter Ruby Hirsch said, “In this city we have a history of communities coming out to stop dawn raids and we have defeated that inhumane practice before.”

“The mood was defiant and

furiously angry—we are not moving until our neighbours are released.”

In the early evening the police announced that in order to protect “safety, public health and well being” a decision had been made to release the detainees.

Lakhvir Singh said that the moment the doors of the police van opened was “the happiest feeling”.

First minister Nicola Sturgeon had registered her “deep concern” over the raid.

But it was not, as some claim, a matter of liberal Scottish leaders versus repressive British ones.

Enforcement

Immigration enforcement is a “reserved matter”, controlled by Boris Johnson’s vicious government. But the police are under the jurisdiction of the Scottish government. It could have ordered their withdrawal at any time.

Organisation from below has always been crucial in combating deportations.

Raymie, speaking from the protest on Thursday afternoon said, “It’s been a wonderful response from those who are outraged by this racist process. We beat this 15 years ago and we will beat it again.”

Protests planned on anniversary of George Floyd’s murder

by ISABEL RINGROSE

THE one-year anniversary of the police murder of George Floyd will see anti-racists mobilise against institutional racism across Britain.

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and the TUC union federation are calling on workers and activists to take the knee on Tuesday of next week—a year to the day Floyd was murdered.

Activists plan #SayTheirNames events in towns and cities on the day. They will read the names of black

people who’ve died after contact with the police.

They will also read the names of black people who’ve died of coronavirus. Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on black people.

Action will take place in local areas, workplaces, colleges and schools as part of a push to take the fight against institutional racism into every workplace.

Weyman Bennett is a co-convenor of SUTR.

He told Socialist Worker, “At the heart of the fight against racism has always been the question of where people

are divided—and where they’re brought together.

“That’s the workplace. They use racism to divide and rule and we have to oppose that.

“Solidarity is the energy of change and without it there can be no progress.”

SUTR and the TUC held an online rally on Monday of this week to mobilise for the week of action and discuss fighting anti-racism in the workplace.

Speakers included representatives from the NEU, PCS, Unison, Unite, GMB, TUC, RMT and FBU unions.

Weyman highlighted

the importance of continuing the fight against institutional racism.

“What happened to George Floyd is happening in Britain—when black people are killed, there is no justice,” he said, “SUTR is coming out to demand a public inquiry to expose the lie that there isn’t institutional racism here.”

Anti-racists must use the anniversary of Floyd’s death to stand in solidarity with the US and fight all forms of racism in Britain.

Find out more about the SUTR and TUC week of action here bit.ly/GeorgeFloydweekofaction